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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper was to analyze the place of residence projections and attainments of selected Louisiana rural youth and to ascertain the nature of racial and sexual differences. More specifically, the objective was to replicate selected residential projections in a study of Texas rural youth and to extend the analysis to subsequent place of residence attainments. Data for this analysis were obtained from a panel of senior boys and girls in 20 Louisiana rural high schools in 1968 who were followed up personally or by mail in 1972. Statistically significant chi-square differences at the .01 level by race and sex were found for residential aspirations and expectations. These were due primarily to substantially greater proportions of Blacks desiring and expecting to live in large cities. Boys were more likely to desire and expect farm residence. Comparisons for strength of aspirations, certainty of expectations, and residential attainments were not statistically significant, except for female racial differences in certainty. It was apparent, however, that the racial differences were greater than the sexual differences. Black females were the most certain of their expectations while white females were the least certain. In general, these findings replicated those of the Texas study. (Author/HBC)

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RESIDENTIAL PROJECTIONS AND PLACE OF RESIDENCE OF SELECTED LOUISIANA RURAL YOUTH*

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the place of residence projections and attainments of selected Louisiana rural youth and to ascertain the nature of racial and sexual differences. More specifically, the objective is to replicate selected residential projections in a study of Texas rural youth and to extend the analysis to subsequent place of residence attainments. Data for this analysis were obtained from a panel of senior boys and girls in twenty Louisiana rural high schools in 1968 who were followed up personally or by mail in 1972. Statistically significant chi-square differences at the .01 level by race and sex were found for residential aspirations and expectations. These are due primarily to substantially greater proportions of blacks desiring and expecting to live in large cities. Boys were more likely to desire and expect farm residence. Comparisons for strength of aspirations, certainty of expectations, and residential attainments were not statistically significant, except for female racial differences in certainty. Black females were the most certain of their expectations while white females were the least certain. In general, these findings replicate those of the Texas study.

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Migration is a social mechanism for adjusting the geographical distribution of a population. It occurs differentially according to conditions of the areas of origin and destination as well as to certain social characteristics of the migrant. These selective differentials of migrants include age, sex, race, education, and employment (Bogue, 1959: 504; Lee, 1966: 56-57; Suval, 1972: 6, 35-39).

Youth migration from rural to urban areas is a well-known social phenomenon that has been an interest of rural sociologists in the United States for several decades. Although many interrelated factors

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factors influence this migration pattern of rural youth, four major research perspectives that have developed are as follows: social norms and personal aspirations, demographic and ecological factors, social and economic conditions, and family and community factors (Bowles, 1965: 274).

As aspirational approach concerning projections of rural youth for their future place of residence was introduced almost a decade ago. More recently, a conceptual scheme developed for occupational projections has been employed in research on educational and residential projections of rural youth in Texas (Ohlendorf and Kuvlesky, 1968; Kuvlesky and Pelham, 1970).

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the place of residence projections and attainments of selected Louisiana rural youth and to ascertain the nature of racial and sexual differences. More specifically, the objective is to replicate certain residential projections in the Texas study and to extend the analysis to subsequent place of residence attainments.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework utilized in this research distinguishes between two types of status projections--aspirations and expectations (Kuvlesky and Bealer, 1966). Aspiration is the desire for attainment of a status while expectation is the anticipation of attaining the status, whether or not it is desired.

Both aspirations and expectations are subdivided analytically into two elements--the object of the orientation (i.e., the aspiration or expectation) and the strength of orientation toward the object. Strength of orientation refers to the strength of aspiration and the certainty of expectation.

Review of Past Research

Kuvlesky and Pelham (1970) have pointed out that little of the research on migration intentions or plans of youth is directly relevant for the status projection conceptual framework because the research is concerned primarily with one's intention to remain in or leave the present community of residence rather than an orientation to the broader range of potential alternatives for future places of residence. Their extensive literature review yielded only three previous studies that focused directly on residential status projections. All of these were concerned with ascertaining residential aspirations.

In all three of the previous studies, more girls than boys wanted to live in cities. The proportion of girls was two-thirds compared to one-half of the boys in Kentucky study of 451 rural high school seniors (Schwarzweller, 1960). In a Michigan study of 545 high school seniors from four all-rural counties, the proportions were one-third for girls and one-fourth for boys (Cowhig et al., 1960). More females also desired urban residence in a Florida study of 171 black and 240 white high school seniors from three low-income rural counties (Youmans, et al., 1965). Blacks were more likely to prefer urban residence than whites and an exceptionally large proportion of the boys (almost one-half) wanted to live in the country.

In their study of residential projections, Kuvlesky and Pelham (1970) found that much larger proportions of black youth aspired to live in large cities while more white youth aspired to live in small cities or in the country. Few of any race-sex grouping except white boys (22 percent) wanted to live on farms . A majority of all the groupings were weak with respect to strength of aspirations with no statistically significant differences between any race-sex groupings.

The Kuvlesky-Pelham findings for expectations were similar to those for aspirations except that more black males than females expected urban residence. With the exception of black females, their data show a slight but consistent trend for all rate-sex groupings to expect urban residence to a greater extent than it was desired. This was especially pronounced for white males because smaller proportions expected to live on farms or in the country. Regarding certainty of expectations, approximately one-half of each race-sex grouping was certain of their residential expectation. The racial differences in all the findings persisted when SES was controlled.

Procedure

Data Source and Collection

Data for this analysis were obtained from a panel of seniors in 20 Louisiana rural high schools in 1968 who were followed-up personally or by mail in 1972.

In selecting the sample, the state was divided into four geographical areas. Schools were selected from the rural parishes within each area to obtain racial proportions of students corresponding roughly with those for the entire state.

Initial data were collected in the spring of 1968 in group interviews. Seniors attending school on the day of the interviews were included in the sample. No attempt was made to contact any student who was absent. This procedure yielded 544 questionnaires.

Follow-up data were obtained in the summer of 1972 primarily by means of personal interviews. Mail or telephone contact was used when personal interviews could not be conducted because of location outside the state. Questionnaires with complete data for 1968 and 1972 were obtained from a total of 351 respondents (or 64 percent of those in the 1968 sample).

Variables

Residential aspiration is the kind of place where one most desires to live for the rest of his life. It was measured with a forced-choice question offering these alternatives: large city, medium city, small city, town or village, country but not on a farm, and farm.

Strength of residential aspiration represents the relative intensity of desire for one's residential aspiration. The measure was a question that forced students to rank the importance of their residential aspiration relative to six other status aspirations--occupation, income, education, family, material possessions, and leisure. The possible range of scores was from 1-7 and they were grouped as follows: strong (1-3), intermediate (4), and weak (5-7).

Residential expectation is the type of place where one really expects to live most of his life; it was measured with a question similar to the one for aspiration except that desire was changed to expect.

Certainty of residential expectation represents how sure one is that he will actually live in the place he expects. A Likert-type scale was used to measure five degrees of certainty--very certain, certain, not very certain, uncertain, and very uncertain. The very certain and certain categories were combined as certain and the remaining three were combined as uncertain.

Residential attainment is the type of place where one presently resides. It was measured with a forced-choice question offering these alternatives: very large city, small city, town or village, country but not a farm, and farm.

Data Analysis

The sample was subdivided by race and sex so that four separate analyses were conducted for each variable. Assessments of differences and relationships were made of each race-sex grouping for each variable. The chi-square test for two independent samples (Siegel, 1956: 104-111) was used to measure the differences between race-sex groupings while the coefficient of contingency (Siegel, 1956: 196-202) was used to measure the extent of the relationship. The .01 level or one percent probability was the criterion used to determine statistical significance of the observed relationships.

Results

Residential Aspirations

Statistically significant differences in residential aspirations were noted for each race-sex grouping (Table I). These were due primarily to substantially greater proportions of blacks desiring to live in large cities and to considerable variations in those desiring to live on farms. This varied from one-fourth of the white males to none of the black females. Smaller differences included males being less likely to desire living in medium cities, black males not desiring to live in small cities, and less black females wanting to live in the open country. In addition to the statistically significant chi-square differences for each race-sex grouping, substantial coefficients of contingency (0.32 to 0.42) indicated rather strong race-sex relationships with residential aspirations.

Table 1. Residential aspirations of selected Louisiana rural youth in 1968 by race and sex (percentages).

Type of Place	White		Black	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Large city	4	7	25	33
Medium city	13	26	16	27
Small city	12	12	0	12
Town/village	12	15	11	16
Open country	34	31	32	12
Farm	25	9	16	0
Total	100	100	100	100
N	110	120	44	74
No information				3

Grouping	Chi-square	d.f.	P at .01	C
Race				
WM - BM	19.39	5	S	0.33
WF - BF	32.01	5	S	0.38
Sex				
WM - WF	55.64	5	S	0.32
BM - BF	25.05	5	S	0.42

Table 2. Strength of residential aspirations in 1968 of selected Louisiana rural youth by race and sex (percentages).

Strength	White		Black	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Strong	29	33	26	23
Intermediate	25	24	33	38
Weak	46	43	41	39
Total	100	100	100	100
N	110	120	39	74
No information			5	3

Grouping	Chi-square	d.f.	P at .01	C
Race				
WM - BM	1.32	2	NS	0.09
WF - BF	4.54	2	NS	0.15
Sex				
WM - WF	0.34	2	NS	0.04
BM - BF	0.24	2	NS	0.05

No statistically significant results were found regarding strength of residential aspirations (Table 2). However, it is apparent that the racial differences were greater than the sexual differences. This appears to be due to more whites having stronger residential aspirations while more blacks had intermediate strength levels. These differences were most pronounced between the white and black females.

Residential Expectations

The findings for residential expectations closely parallel those for aspirations with statistically significant differences for each race-sex grouping (Table 3). The greatest differences were that substantially greater proportions of blacks expected to live in large cities and the differences for farm residence was also apparent, although less pronounced than for aspirations. Much larger proportions of white males expected to live in the open country but considerably smaller proportions of black females expected to do so. White females were most likely to expect medium city residence while white males were least likely to do so. No black males expected to live in small cities, as was also the case for aspirations. Again, the substantial coefficients of contingency (0.31 to 0.39) indicated moderately strong race-sex relationships with residential expectations.

Table 3. Residential expectations of selected Louisiana rural youth in 1968 by race and sex (percentages).

Type of Place	White		Black	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Large city	10	7	32	31
Medium city	15	31	22	26
Small city	13	16	0	19
Town/village	13	19	10	13
Open country	31	22	22	11
Farm	18	5	14	0
Total	100	100	100	100
N	109	118	41	74
No information	1	2	3	3

Grouping	Chi-square	d.f.	P at .01	C
Race				
WM - BM	16.37	5	S	0.31
WF - BF	25.06	5	S	0.34
Sex				
WM - WF	19.61	5	S	0.31
BM - BF	21.26	5	S	0.39

Table 4. Certainty of residential expectations in 1968 of selected Louisiana rural youth by race and sex (percentages).

Certainty	White		Black	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Certain	57	42	67	78
Uncertain	43	58	33	22
Total	100	100	100	100
N	109	119	43	74
No information	1	1	1	3

Grouping	Chi-square	d.f.	P at .01	C
Race				
WM - BM	1.43	1	NS	0.10
WF - BF	24.48	1	S	0.34
Sex				
WM - WF	5.03	1	NS	0.15
BM - BF	1.71	1	NS	0.12

In general, the youth in this study were certain about their residential expectations (Table 4). With the exception of white females, over one-half of each race-sex grouping was certain they would live in the place they expected. For white females, this situation was reversed and it accounts for the only statistically significant result--the differences between black and white females. This also produced a substantial coefficient of contingency (0.34). Since less than over-half of the white female and only slightly more than one-half of the white males were certain of their expectations, black youth were more certain of their expected place of residence than were white youth.

Residential Attainments

None of the race-sex comparisons produced statistically significant results for residential attainments (Table 5). However, some of the comparisons--especially the racial ones--are interesting. Much larger proportions of the blacks (more than one-third) lived in very large cities compared to only one-fifth of the whites. No black males and only three percent of the black females lived on farms compared to sixteen percent of the white males and eight percent of the white females. The other notable difference was that only eight percent of the black females lived in small cities compared to at least twice of this percentage for all the other groupings. The racial comparisons yielded moderate contingency coefficients (0.24) while the sexual ones were weak (0.15 and 0.17).

Table 5. Residential attainments of selected Louisiana rural youth in 1972 by race and sex (percentages).

	White		Black	
Type of Place	Male	Female	Male	Female
Very large city	22	19	34	35
Small city	16	21	16	8
Town/village	26	28	25	30
Open country	20	24	25	24
Farm	16	8	0	3
Total	100	100	100	100
N	109	120	41	76
No information	1		3	1

Grouping	Chi-square	d.f.	P at .01	C
Race				
WM - BM	8.81	4	NS	0.24
WF - BF	11.84	4	NS	0.24
Sex				
WM - WF	5.57	4	NS	0.15
BM - BF	3.44	4	NS	0.17

Discussion

This research adds to the limited body of knowledge concerning place of residence projections and attainments in two ways. First, it replicates a similar study of residential projections of rural high school sophomores in Texas. Second, it is the first known study to analyze subsequent residential attainments.

The findings of this study provide further support for the generalizations from the limited past studies that rural female and black youth have a greater propensity to desire and expect urban residence. For white female aspirations, this finding has been reported in all four previous studies during the past decade. Further reservations are in order for expectations because only one other study of residential expectations is known to have been conducted. The racial differences for the variables also need to be qualified due to the small number of available studies. In addition, it should be pointed out that the racial and sexual differences in residential aspirations and expectations in this study are consistent across all groupings whereas the sexual differences for blacks were not statistically significant in the Texas study. The findings in this study support those of other studies in which residential aspirations have been found to be weak. However, large proportions of all youth, particularly blacks, were certain of their expectations in this study, as well as in the only other one in which certainty was studied.

Since this is the only known study of residential attainments, the basis for generalization is restricted severely. However, some comments and observations about the findings are in order. The absence of any statistically significant racial and sexual differences in attainments is somewhat surprising, especially since such strong differences existed for aspirations and expectations four years earlier. Subsequent analyses should determine whether these differences persist in aspirations and expectations after four years. Further analysis is also needed to determine the nature of the relationships between residential projections (aspirations and expectations) and place of residence attainments. Such analyses are planned with the data used in this study.

Finally, it should be noted that residential aspirations, expectations, and attainments are relevant for the current policy emphasis on rural development. The desires and plans of rural youth are a key element for the success of this program and the findings of this study suggest that more rural youth want to live in rural areas than are able to do so currently. In this regard, it would also be interesting to compare the place of residence projections and attainments of urban youth to determine the extent to which they aspire and expect to reside in rural areas.

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